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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6183

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 4895

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

SUBJ: AMERICAN OBSERVERS TO VIET-NAM

REF: SAIGON 4819

1. ON THE BASIS OF IMPRESSION AND REACTIONS WHICH OBSERVERS HAVE INDICATED DURING THEIR TIME HERE WE HAVE ROUGHLY CATEGORIZED THEM IN SIX GROUPS AS FOLLOWS:

A. UNRESERVEDLY FAVORABLE AND MORE OR LESS OUTSPOKEN: MURPHY, HUGHES, BARR, LUCEY, RUDIN, ANTELL, GULLANDER, MONROE, SERRA AND SULLIVAN.

B. UNRESERVEDLY FAVOABLE BUT MORE OR LESS TACIT: HICKENLOOPER, JAMES, ELSON AND YOUNG.

C. FAVORABLE BUT WITH RESERVATIONS AND MORE OR LESS OUTSPOKEN: MUSKIE;

D. THE SAME BUT MORE OR LESS TACIT MCKELDIN AND PATTERSON;

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DT 12/23/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFY ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE BELIEVED ☐
P.A. or F.O.I. EXEMPTIONS

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PAE 2 RUMJIR 4895/1 S E C R E T
E. POSITION UNSTATED BUT MORE OR LESS OUTSPOKEN: GUY (WITH FAVORABLE LEANINGS) AND MCGANNON:

F. POSITION UNSTATED AND MORE OR LESS TACIT: MCCALL, KNIGHT AND SMITH.

OBVIOUSLY THESE ARE ALL FAIRLY BORAD CATEGORIES AND ARE OF VALUE ONLY IN GENERAL TERMS. IT MUST ALSO BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE RESERVE OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR POSITION OR WILLINGNESS TO SPEAK OUT MAY OFTEN BE MOTIVIATED BY CONSIDERATINS QUITE APART FROM THOSE STEMMING EXCLUSIVELY FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE HERE. SIMILARLY, IT IS CLEAR THAT IDEAS AND REACTIONS MAY CRYSTALLIZE FURTHER AS THE OBSERVERS RE-VIEW THEIR WHOLE EXPERIENCE IN THEIR MINDS AND THERE MAY BE CHANGES.

2. THE OBSERVERS' SCHEDULE HAS BEEN TOO BUSY, INCLUDING A HEAVY PROGRAM OF BRIEFINGS TODAY (SEPT 4) TO PERMIT OF EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF IMPRESSIONS IN MANY CASES. TH IMPESSIONS AND REACTIONS RECORDED IN THIS MESSAGE ARE A SUMMARY OF THESE REACTIONS TO THE EXTENT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE THEM.

3. HICKENLOOPER - VERY FAVORABLE REACTION TO ENTIRE ELECTION

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PROCESS AS HE HAS WITNESSED IT. HE HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS, COMMENTING ON INSTANCES OF ACTUAL DISCOURTESY.

4. MUSKIE - CAME TO VIET NAM WITH AN OPEN AND QUESTIONING MIND, AND PREPARED WITH MANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING POSSIBLE IRREGULARITY OF THE ELECTION PROCEEDINGS. HE HAS ASKED SOME VERY TOUGH QUESTIONS AND SEEN SOME OF THE LEADING CRITICS OF THIEU AND KY, BUT HE SEEMS RELATIVELY SATISIFIED WITH THE ADEQUACY OF THE ELECTION PREPARATIONS AND THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTIONS.

5. MURPHY - HAS BEEN CLEARY IMPRESSED BY WHAT HE HAS SEEN

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AND HAS BEEN FULLY PREPARED TO SAY SO. HE HAS GONE ON RECORD ENDORSING THE FAIRNESS AND HONESTY OF THE ELCTIONS.

6. HUGHES - HAS BEEN VERY THOROUGH IN CARRYING OUT INTERVIEWS AT ALL LEVELS FROM HUONG TO THE MAN IN THE STREET. HE HAS BEEN VERY IMPRESSED AND HAS SAID HE INTENDS TO GO ON THE AIR ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES WHEN HE GETS HOME. HE HAS ALREADY MADE SOME VERY GOOD STATEMENTS CONCENING THE HIGH QUALITY OF THE ELECTION PREPARATIONS AND HE HAS INDICATED THAT HE HAS FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF FRAUD. IN FACT HE TOLD KY

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PERSONALLY ON SATURDAY THAT HE WAS NOT CONVINCED OF ANY FRAUD IN THE ELECTIONS AND THIS APPEARS TO REMAIN HIS VIEW.

7. MCCALL - HAS REGARDED THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE ELECTIONS WITH INNATE SKEPTICISM. HE HAS CLEARLY BECOME CONVINCED THAT HE WAS RIGHTHTN DOING SO AND HAS STATED THAT HE IS IMPRESSED BY THE ADEQUACY OF THE ELECTION LAWS WHICH, IN SOME INSTANCES, GO BEYOND THOSE IN THE US IN GRANTING A BROAD FRANCHISE TO THE PEOPLE. HE RECOGNIZES THAT HE COULD NOT SEE MUCH INSO SHORT A TIME, BUTON BASIS OF WHAT HE WAS ABLE TO SEE AND DO HE FEELS THE ELECTIONS WERE CERTAINLY FREE, ALBEIT A BIT CONFUSING TO THE INEXPERIENCED ELECTORATE AND THEREFORE POSSIBLE SOMEWHAT LACKING IN ADEQUAC AS A TEST OF THEIR DESIRES.

8. GUY - APPARENTLY CONVINCED OF THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTIONS, AS WAS HIS ASSOCIATE, HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER HJELLE.

9. KNIGHT - WAS SATISFIED WITH POLLING PLACE MECHANICS. HE WONDERED ABOUT TRANSMISSION OF RESULTS TO HIGHER LEVELS (BUT WAS RECEPTIVE TO ARGUMENT THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL BE VIGOROUS IN CERTIFICATION PROCESS). HE HAS NOT YET FILED ANYTHING TO HIS PAPERS, AND WHEN HE DOES SO IT WILL BE ZOBSERVATIONS" RATHER THAN "INTERPRETATION". HOWEVER, HE

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IS WELL AWARE OF PRESS INTEREST IN TRUONG DINH DZU'S UN-
EXPECTEDLY STRONG SHOWING AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PRESS IN-
TERPETATION OF IT WAS A "EACE VOGE." HE STRESSED DIFF-
ICULTY OF KNOWING WHAT VIETNAMESE REALLY THINK AND WAS PUT
OFF BY RIGIDITY OF POSITIONS OF SOME "DISSIDENTS". TON THAT
THIEN OF VIETNAM GUARIAN CONCEDED TO KNIGHAT THAT "DESPITE
ALL I'VE SAID, ELECTIONS ARE A GOOD THING, "BUT AU TRUONG
THANH MAINTAINED THAT ELECTIONS WERE A COMPLETE FARCE,
REFUSED TO CONSIDER RUNNING FOR LOWER HOUSE, AND SAID HE
HAD "DREAMED" OF A FOUR-PHASE PROCESS THAT WOULD PERMIT HIS
RETURN TO POLITICAL LIFE. WHEN ASKED FOR EVIDENCE OF RIGGING
THANH RESPONDED WITH WHAT KNIGHT CALLED A "DECLARATION."

IN SHORT, KNIGHT IS A GENERAL FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY
WHAT HE HAS SEEN OF ELECTIONS AND LARGELY INUMPRESSED BY
DETRACTORS OF ELECTIONS, BUT HE ALSO APPRECIATES HOW MUCH
IS UNSEEALBE (OR UNKNOWABLE). HE IS THEREFORE AMONG TWO OR
THREE OBSERVERS MOST CERTAIN TORESERVE THEIR POSITIONS.

10. PATTERSON - HAS BEEN VERY INQUISITIVE AND ANXIOUS TO BASE
HIS CONCLUSIONS ON AS MUCH INFORMATION AS HE IS ABLE TO

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DEVELOP. HE HAS SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE HAS SEEN NO
REAL EVIDENCE OF ELECTION IRREGULARITIES BUT HE HAS NOT YET
CLEARLY GONE ON RECORD WITH HIS VIEWS.

11. BARRI RUDIN - HAS SAID HE IS QUITE IMPRESSED, BUT THE
PREPARATIONS ARE MUCH BETTER THAN HE HAD EXPECTED THEM TO
BE. HE VISITED FIVE OR SIX POLLING PLACES AND SAID HE THOUGHT
THE VOTING OPEATION WAS VERY WELL RUN BY THE VIETNAMESE.
HE WATCHED THE CLOSING OF THE POLLS AND THE COUNTING
OF THE POLLS AND THE COUNTING OF THE BALLOTS FOR ONE HOUR.
HE SAID IT SEEMED TO HIM IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO RIG
THE ELCTIONS.

12. WHITENEY YOUNG - HAS INDICATED FROM THE BEGINNING OF
HIS TOURS THAT HE HAS BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE ELECTION

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PREPARATIONS AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT EXPRESSED HIMSELF STRONGLY HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR IN CONVERSATIONS THAT HIS REACTION TO ALL HE HAS SEEN HAS BEEN VERY FAVORABLE. ON ELECTION DAY HE VISITED EIGHT OR NINE POLLING PLACES IN SAIGON. HE WATCHED POLL CLOSING AND THE START OF COUNTING. HE SAID THAT IF THERE WAS ANY RIGGING HE COULDN'T SEE IT. HE NOTED THAT THE VOTING WAS ORDERLY, THE PEOPLE RELAZED. HE TALKED TO MANY VIETNAMESE, AND HE SAID HE RECEIVED NO COMPLAINTS OF PRESSURE, RIGGING OR UNFAIR TACTICS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6183

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 4895

EXDIS

RUBJ: AMERICAN OBSERVERS TO VIET-NAM

REF: SAIGON 4819

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E. POSITION UNSTATED BUT MORE OR LESS OUTSPOKEN: GUY (WITH

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FAVORABLE LEANINGS) AND MCGANNON:

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PAGE 5 RUMJIR 4895/1 S E C R E T
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6184

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 4895

EXDIS

SUBJ: AMERICAN OBSERVERS TO VIET-NAM

REF: SAIGON 4819

13. ANTELL - HAS ALMOST EXUDED ENTHUSIASM ABOUT ALL HE HAS SEEN, BUT THOUGH HE IS CLEARLY AND VAORABLE IMPRESSED SOME OF HIS STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS AND TO OTHERS HAVE BEEN CRITIZED AS NAIVE AND HAVE DETRACTED A BIT FROM THE IMPACT OF HIS VALUE AS A WITNESS.

14. GULLANDER - HAS INDICATED THAT HIS TENTAIVE BELIEF IS THAT THERE IS NO VIDENCE OF IRREGULARITY OR OFFICIAL MIS-CONDUCT, AND THAT ELECTION PROCESSES ARE FAIR. HE CLEARLY HAS BEEN MOST IMPRESSED BY WHAT HE HAS SEEN.
15. SULLIVAN - REMARKED FAVORABLE UPON THE INTENSITY OF

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INVOLVEMENT ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. HE SEEMED HIGHLY IMPRESSED BY THE GVN OFFICIAL SHE MET AND BY THE ELECTION PREPARATIONS. HE VISITED SEVERAL POLLING PLACES IN CAN THO AND MET WITH OVER A DOZEN LABOR LEADERS. THOSE WHO SPOKE ENGLISH SAID, ALTHOUGH

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THEY WOULDN'T SAY SO PUBLICLY. THEY HOPED FOR THIEU VICTORY BECAUSE OF IF NEW GOVERNMENT COMES IN THEY WOULD SPEND TIME, ENERGY TRYING TO REESTABLISH THEIR POSITIONS OF IN-. FLUENCE IN THE LABOR SCENE. THEY WORRIED SOME ABOUT CORRUPTING BUT WERE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT PUSHING SOCIAL RE-. FORMS. THEY ARE SATISIFIED WITH ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND BELEIVE NEW SENATE AND LOWER HOUSE WILL HELP ADVANCE SOCIAL REFORM. LABOR LEADERS SAID THEY THEMSELVES DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO RUN SENATE SLATE BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD DO BETTER FOR THEIR MEMBERSHIP BY CONCENTRATING ON LOWER HOUSE RACE.

16. DR. ELSON - HAS INDICATED THROUGHOUT THAT HE HAS BEEN MOST FAVORABLE IMPESSED BY WHAT HE HAS SEEN. HE CLEARLY FEELS THAT THE GVN HAS DONE REMARKABLE JOB IN CARRYING OUT ELECTIONS UNDER WAR TIME CONDITIONS AND THAT TESTS ARE BEING APPLIED TO THESE ELECTIONS WHICH ARE UNFAIR UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

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HE STATES THAT HE HAS FOUND LITTLE EVIDENCE OF IRREGULARIY AND THAT HE HAS BEEN DEEPLY MOVED BY THE DETERMINATION SHOWN BY THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE FACE OF SUCH DIFFICULTIES.

17. MAYOR BARR - HAS INDICATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HISHOHIMPRESSION THAT THE ELECTION PROCESS IS WELL ORGANIZED IN TERMS OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE POLITICAL CONDITIONS AND THE ELECTIONS HAVE ALLOWED FOR FREE EXPRESSION.

18. MCKELDIN - HAS FELT THAT HE VOTING WAS FAIR BUT THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE NOT TOO WELL ORGANIZED. HE OBSERVED ONE UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT ON ELECTION DAY. HE VISITED A POLLING PLACE AT EXACTLY 8 AM. AND THE ELECTION OFFICALS HAD NOT SHOWN UP YET. ABOUT 200 VOTERS WERE THEERE WAITING TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS. HE COMMENTED UNFAVORABLY ON THIS, BUT HIS OTHER COMMENTS ON THE ELECTIONS INDICATED AN OVERALL IM PRESSION THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE FREE, FAIR AND WITH NO SIGN OF RIGGING. MAYOR MCKELDIN WAS GREATLY CONCERNED BY THE WHOLE SITUATION AS HE OBSEVED IT HERE AND SEEMED ANXIOUS

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TO CARRY HIS OBSERVATION BEYOND JUST THE ELECTION PROBLEM. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HE EXPRESSED HIS FEELING THAT WE

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MUST BRING OUR EFFORTS IN VIETNAM TO A SUCCESSFUL CONSLUSION AND GET OUR MEN HOME AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

19. JAMES - HAS BEEN TO VIET-NAM SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST AND BELIEVES THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE DOING FINE JOB. THE ELECTIONS, WHICH HE CONSIDERED FAIR AND HONEST, APPARENTLY FURTHER CONFIRMED HIM IN HIS BELEIF.

20. STANFORD SMITH - HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS ABOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF. HE HAS BEEN INTERESTED AND INQUISITIVE, HOWEVER, AND CLEARLY DETERMINED TO INFORM HIMSELF AS THOROUGHLY AS POSSIBLE ON THE SITUATION. HE SAW A WIDE VAIRIEY OF PEOPLE AND APPEARS SATISFIED THAT HE WAS NOT HINDERED IN HISEFFORTS TO GET THE INFORMATION HE DESIRED.

21. SCERRA - OBSERVED THE ELECTIONS IN BAN ME THUOT. HE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SATISIFED THAT HE SAW NO IRREGULARITIS AND THAT THE ELCTIONS WERE HANDLED WELL.

22. MUNROE AND LUCEY. MUNROE APPEARED IMPRESSED MOST FAVORABLY BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN AND COMMENTED ON THE FINE PERFORMANCE OF THE GVN . UNFORTUNATELY EMBOFFS WERE NOT ABLE TO DISCUSS

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WITH HIM, OR WITH ARCHBISHOP LUCEY THEIR REACTIONS TO THEIR EXPERIENCES ON ELECTION DAY.

23. MCGANNON - DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR THE OBSERVERS. YC MADE HIS OWN ARRAGEMENTS AND FOR REASONS OF PERSONAL BUSINESS DEPARTED SAIGON ON SUNDAY SEPT 13. WE DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR READING ON HIS REACTIONS.

24. SCAMMON , HERZBERG AND PENNIMAN - WERE ALL BOTH IM-

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PRESSED AND MOVED BY THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WHOM THEY WITNESSED BOTING IN TAY NINH AND LONG XUYEN ON ELECTION DAY. THEY EXPRESSED THEMSELVES AS IMPRESSED BY THE ORGANIZATION AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ELECTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT IN A COUNTRY ACTIVELY AT WAR.

PAE 6 UMJIR 4895/2 S E C R ESE
25. THE FOREGOING IS AN EFFORT TO GIVE AT LEAST THE FLAVOR OF THE REACTION OF EACH OF THE MEMBERS OF THE OBSERVER GROUP TO THEIR EXPERIENCE HERE. OUR OVERALL IMPRESSION IS THAT ALL OF THEM FELT QUITE WELL SATISIFIED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY THEY WERE GIVEN BY BOTH MISSION AND GVN ADMANGEMENTS FOR THEM TO OBSERVE THE ELECTIONS FAIRLY AND WITHOUT RESTROXTION.

26. THE OBSERVERS DEPARTED SAIGON AT 6 PM THIS AFTERNOON (SEPT 4) ENROUTE BWJK TO THE UNITED STATES.
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